

LEAP - University Preparedness (LEAP - UP): Developing a tertiary enabling program for low- SES students from refugee backgrounds

1 January 2016 to 30 September 2017

Sonal Singh, Macquarie University

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Modifications: Changed to meet WCAG 2.0 accessibility requirements.
Alternate text inserted for all images. Minor typographical errors corrected.

Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Programme (HEPPP)

2015 National Priorities Pool FINAL REPORT

LEAP - University Preparedness (LEAP - UP): Developing a tertiary enabling program for low-SES students from refugee backgrounds

1 January 2016 to 30 September 2017

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In accordance with the Conditions of Grant, you must submit to the Department a Final Report (Clause 6.1 of Part A) and an Acquittal Report (clause 6.4 of Part A).

To meet this obligation, please submit:

- the completed **Final Report** template, in Word and PDF
- the completed and signed **Declaration** form, in PDF
- the completed **Acquittal Report** template, in Excel and PDF.

All documents must be submitted to equity@education.gov.au by **31 January 2017**.

If you require additional guidance or clarification, please contact us at equity@education.gov.au.

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1. PROJECT SUMMARY (Conditions of Grant, clause 2.2(a)-(e) of Part A)

Objectives

Indicate the extent to which the Project Objectives specified in clause 3 of Part A of the Conditions of Grant were met. Where obligations established in the Conditions of Grant were not met, please identify these and provide an explanation of circumstances and consequences.

Table 1: Project objectives

IDENTIFIED OBJECTIVE	EXTENT TO WHICH THE OBJECTIVE WAS MET
<p>Improve support to low-SES students from refugee backgrounds to access, and succeed in higher education by reviewing international best practice and initiatives in Australian universities;</p>	<p>Systematic literature review was conducted in February 2016 and presented to reference group members for discussion. The literature review identified best practices and gaps that can be addressed through an innovative tertiary enabling program.</p>
<p>Conduct a detailed needs assessment with past and present students of the LEAP-Macquarie Mentoring Program;</p>	<p>In-depth interviews have been carried out with:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Former mentees on LEAP-Macquarie Mentoring Program (n=20) 2. Current mentees on LEAP-Macquarie Mentoring Program (n=15) 3. One in depth interview was also carried out with a university student from a refugee background. 4. Two student focus group discussions were conducted with current mentees at two high schools in NSW. <p>These interviews helped the researchers to understand this cohort's attitudes, behaviour, motivation and aspiration towards higher education, as well as to assess the barriers and challenges faced by low-SES students from refugee backgrounds to access and succeed in higher education.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Three interviews were conducted with academic and professional staff at Macquarie University to determine the institutional structures required to develop an effective enabling program. 6. A stakeholder analysis was also conducted with teachers and school principals to assess their evaluation of needs for this cohort (n=19). <p>The interviews, focus group discussion and stakeholder analysis informed the design of an enabling program framework.</p>
<p>Develop an evidence-based tertiary enabling program specific to the needs of this cohort;</p>	<p>LEAP – UP was designed to meet the unique needs of students from refugee and humanitarian visa backgrounds, as identified through the research</p>

IDENTIFIED OBJECTIVE	EXTENT TO WHICH THE OBJECTIVE WAS MET
	<p>process. The LEAP - UP program offers students from refugee and humanitarian visa backgrounds a coordinated blend of academic and social support to empower them with capacity to confidently navigate the University environment.</p> <p>The program has two phases:</p> <p>LEAP - UP PHASE 1 Building on the success of LEAP - Macquarie Mentoring (Refugee Mentoring) Program, LEAP - UP will partner with community schools in the Sydney Metropolitan region to deliver Phase 1 of the program.</p> <p>LEAP - UP Phase 1 will offer two days of experiential and information sessions to final year (Year 12) High School students from refugee and humanitarian visa backgrounds, who intend to pursue higher education studies.</p> <p>Phase 1 will be delivered in the first half of the Year 12 academic year. Students participating in LEAP – UP will not be required to have previously participated in the LEAP – Macquarie Mentoring (Refugee Mentoring) program.</p> <p>Importantly, the support offered to students participating in LEAP - UP Phase 1 aims to create a level of preparedness that allows students to begin their studies with confidence, irrespective of where they choose to pursue their higher education studies.</p> <p>LEAP - UP PHASE 2</p> <p>LEAP - UP Phase 2 offers three days of intensive pre-university preparation for all students of refugee and humanitarian visa backgrounds who have accepted an offer to study at Macquarie University.</p> <p>Phase 2 is delivered prior to the University’s Orientation Week, to prepare students to be familiar and confident to participate in University Orientation activities offered to all students commencing the year or session.</p> <p>Phase 2 students are introduced to the Transition Support Coordinator, who provides continued engagement and support to students, for as long as this is sought and required.</p> <p>Details of the program are available at: http://www.mq.edu.au/about/about-the-</p>

IDENTIFIED OBJECTIVE	EXTENT TO WHICH THE OBJECTIVE WAS MET
	university/offices-and-units/widening-participation/the-leap-program/leap-up
Form a National Community of Practice comprising researchers, equity practitioners and partner organisations active in supporting low-SES students from refugee backgrounds.	<p>In 2016, The Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN) Australia, Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA), University of Newcastle, RMIT, Macquarie University, Swinburne, and Griffith University launched “The Refugee Education Special Interest Group “. This group is a national community of practice that comprises researchers, equity practitioners and partner organisations, active in supporting students from refugee backgrounds.</p> <p>A website has been developed to include information about and contacts for a range of people working within the education and refugee/asylum seeker environments. The site also provides stakeholders with an opportunity to connect with others working in their state and territory, as well as an opportunity to be involved in the group’s advocacy work.</p> <p>http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/educationsig</p>

Project Activities, Milestones and Key Performance Indicators

Below, please specify whether:

- all project Activities specified in Schedule 1 of the Conditions of Grant were completed
- all Project Milestones specified in Schedule 1 of the Conditions of Grant were completed
- all Key Performance Indicators specified in Schedule 1 of the Conditions of Grant were met.

Where obligations established in the Conditions of Grant were not met, identify these and provide an explanation of circumstances and consequences.

Table 2: Project activities, milestones and KPIs

TIME FRAME	PLANNED ACTIVITIES & MILESTONES	PROJECT ACTIVITIES & MILESTONES COMPLETED	IDENTIFIED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OUTCOME
Nov 2015	Special Interest Group at EPHEA Conference in Geelong	Completed	> 12 colleagues from HE institutions nationally form initial Community of Practice	Special Interest Group held at EPHEA 2015 Conference on 12th November in Geelong.
Jan 2016	Appoint Project Manager / Lead	Completed	Highly qualified and experienced Project	Project Manager secured by January 2016 and Research

TIME FRAME	PLANNED ACTIVITIES & MILESTONES	PROJECT ACTIVITIES & MILESTONES COMPLETED	IDENTIFIED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OUTCOME
	Researcher and Research Assistant		Manager / Lead Researcher and Research Assistant secured	Assistant secured by February 2016.
Jan 2016	Appoint Reference Group	Completed	> experts in the field form Reference Group to oversee project	Reference Group formed in March 2016 with first face to face reference group meeting held in May 20th 2016
Feb 2016	Ethics clearance for research at Macquarie University	Completed	Ethics clearance granted	Ethics application from Macquarie University granted in May 2016. As the project progressed, we needed SERAP clearance from NSW Department of Education. Additional ethics application was lodged with SERAP and granted in May 2016.
Feb 2016	International literature review completed	Completed	Literature review is comprehensive and up-to-date	This was completed on time in February 2016 with results presented to reference group for discussion.
Mar 2016	Audit / stock take of practical interventions and support programs for students from refugee backgrounds in Australian HE completed	Completed	Information received from all Australian HE Institutions	Successfully completed on March 2016 with results identifying the gaps across institutions on services provided to students from refugee backgrounds.
Mar-May 2016 Aug 2016	Interviews / focus groups held with partner high school and Macquarie University students from refugee backgrounds, teachers, academics and student support staff	Completed	Ample, robust data collected from all participant groups	Interviews were completed with academics and students at Macquarie University in June 2016. Stakeholder analysis with school principals and teachers were completed on August 15th as this was the best available time for representatives from all 9 schools to be involved in the mentoring program.
Jun 2016 Oct 2016	Data analysis completed		Needs of low-SES students from refugee backgrounds transitioning from school to higher education identified and prioritised	Data analysis was completed in November/December 2016. This delay was due to late data collection with school representatives and the research assistant needing leave for personal reasons.
Jul 2016	Special Interest Group meeting at UniSTARS / HERDSA in Perth	Completed	SIG well-attended and additional colleagues joined Community of Practice	Held in July 2016 in UniSTARS in Perth. Attended by 16 representatives from academia and practioners. This coincided

TIME FRAME	PLANNED ACTIVITIES & MILESTONES	PROJECT ACTIVITIES & MILESTONES COMPLETED	IDENTIFIED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OUTCOME
				with the launch of the National Special Interest Group.
Jan-Feb 2017	Course design	Completed	Pilot enabling program developed.	LEAP UP Program was developed in March 2017.
Mar 2017	Pilot enabling program pitched to past and current students of LEAP - Macquarie Mentoring program	Completed	Positive interest in course generated	Pilot enabling program pitched to past and current students of LEAP - Macquarie Mentoring program.
Mar 2017	Recruitment to pilot enabling program to be run	Completed	10 students recruited to program	10 students participated in the LEAP-UP program in July 2017.
May-Jun 2017	Website Digital Resource developed to support Community of Practice	Completed	Positive feedback from fellow researchers and practitioners	Website Digital Resource developed to support Community of Practice.
Sep 2017	Final Report submission	Submitted	Final Report and financial acquittal submitted on time to be approved by DET	Final Report submission

Highlights and Issues

Provide a summary of highlights and achievements arising from your project (maximum half page)

- In 2016, The Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN) Australia, Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA), University of Newcastle, RMIT, Macquarie University, Swinburne, and Griffith University launched “The Refugee Education Special Interest Group”. This group is a national community of practice, including researchers, equity practitioners and partner organisations, active in supporting students from refugee backgrounds. A website was developed to include information about and contacts for a range of people working within the education and refugee/asylum seeker environments. The site also provides visitors with an opportunity to connect with others working in their state and territory, as well as an opportunity to get involved in the group’s advocacy work. <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/educationsig>
- Development and delivery of this program is a significant achievement in supporting students in their transition to university. The LEAP - UP program offers these students a coordinated blend of academic and social support to empower them to confidently navigate the university environment. This innovative program will engage students as they start their higher education journey by encouraging them to feel connected with, and belonging to, the university community. The LEAP - UP program aims to propel students to achieve fulfilling study outcomes and experiences.

Did the project lead to implementable outcomes? What changes will result at your institution/nationally? How is research being translated into practice? Are there activities resulting from this project that will be continued?

- The LEAP - UP (University Preparedness) – pilot program was designed to meet the unique needs of students from refugee and humanitarian visa backgrounds. LEAP - UP offers students a coordinated blend of academic and social support to empower them to confidently navigate the university environment. This innovative program will engage students as they start their higher education journey by encouraging them to feel engaged and connected with the University community and is now being implemented at Macquarie University.
- This program targets students starting Year 12 in term 4 2017.
- LEAP-UP will be delivered in 2 distinct phases – phase 1 & 2. Phase 1 offers two days of experiential and information sessions to final year (Year 12) high school students from refugee and humanitarian visa backgrounds, who intend to pursue higher education studies. Phase 2 includes three days of intensive pre-university preparation for all students of refugee and humanitarian visa backgrounds who have been offered, and have accepted a placement to study at Macquarie University.
- LEAP -UP Phase 1 starts in term 4 2017 and as valued partner schools, we'd like to offer this opportunity to them first, before reaching out to other schools.
- LEAP -UP Phase 1 is also delivered in two parts:
 - Phase 1A - a 2-hour in-school session- will be delivered between 9/10/2017 27/10/2017 depending on school's availability.
 - Phase 1B - a tailored on-campus experience - will be held at Macquarie University on Tuesday 31 October 2017.

Did you undertake an evaluation of your project?

Yes No

Please summarise the findings and attach the evaluation report.

- 34% increase in understanding of the benefits associated with pursuing higher education studies at university (pre-and post-Program student surveys).
- 83% of the students agreed the Program met their expectations (post program student survey).
- 100% of the students intended to recommend the program to student peers (post program student survey).

Qualitative responses:

- *'Very good to help engaging at uni life and developing sense of belonging to the university community'*
- *'It taught me a lot about the various facilities available at uni that I had no idea about even after a few semesters of studying'*
- *'It is a preparation for new students through technology'*
- *'The outcome of the program made us feel more supported and confident to start uni'*
- *'The program exceeded my expectation, even as a student who has been at Macquarie for a while'*

- ‘Yes. It was a great experience which helped me meet new people and opened up a lot of opportunities’
- ‘Much knowledge and understanding of University and its technology lifestyle’

(Extracts from students Quotes post program survey response to open questions and informal interviews)

Where applicable, indicate number of the following resulting from this project:

Student contacts	10
Journal (or other publication) submissions	1
Conference Presentations	2
Websites developed	2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.mq.edu.au/about/about-the-university/offices-and-units/widening-participation/the-leap-program/leap-up • http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/educationsig
Educational or marketing campaigns	3
Community organisations engaged	5
Schools engaged	10
Parental/family contacts	5

Optional - If you included transformational/behavioural change KPIs in your EOI please summarise outcomes here:

Percentage increase in confidence	44%
Percentage increase in aspiration	33%

Describe any issues that occurred during the year and any mitigation strategies you implemented.

They key issues encountered were:

- The volume and quality of the data collected are much higher than we had expected. Data mining and filtration strategies were adapted.
- The ill-health of our Research Assistant (from Refugee background) and the unplanned reallocation of time of our Lead Researcher to work on the ACIL Allen HEPPP Evaluation, necessary to meet the short deadlines of the evaluation required timelines to be reviewed. An extension was requested and approved by the Department.

2. OTHER PROJECT MATERIAL (Conditions of Grant, clause 2.2 (b)-(e) of Part A)

List the titles of any published reports, pamphlets or other documentation produced in the course of the Project and attach them to this Final Report.

Table 3: Additional materials produced over the course of the project

TYPE	AUTHOR	DATE OF PUBLICATION	PUBLICATION DETAILS
Workshop and Conference Presentation	Ruth Tregale and Sonal Singh	29 June 2016	<p>Transition Support for Students from Refugee Backgrounds in Higher Education</p> <p>Paper presented at Students, Transitions, Achievement, Retention & Success (UniSTARS) STARS Conference 2016</p> <p>http://unistars.org/program/2016-program/workshops-2016/</p>
Conference Presentation	Ruth Tregale and Sonal Singh	3 July 2016	<p>Bridging the Gap for Students from Refugee Backgrounds: LEAP - University Preparedness (LEAP - UP) - Presentation by Widening Participation Unit, Macquarie University at HERDSA in Sydney.</p> <p>http://herdsa2016.org/program.html</p>
Journal Article	Sonal Singh and Ruth Tregale	20 May 2017	<p>Student Success Journal (under review)</p> <p>Transition Support for Students from Refugee Backgrounds in Higher Education in Australia.</p>

3. ACQUITTAL REPORT (Conditions of Grant, clause 6.4(e), clause 6.7-8 of Part A)

Have you fully expended the Grant Funds provided under the Conditions of Grant?

Yes No

If the answer is No, please specify:

- *the amount of funds remaining: \$*
- *the reason for this underspend:*

Ensure that the completed Acquittal Report template is signed by an appropriate university officer and attached to this Final Report.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE - Unspent 2015 National Priorities Pool Grant Funds*

- *Grant recipients must fully expend these 2015 National Priorities Pool funds in the project period for which the grant is made and report on this expenditure to the Commonwealth, including the amount of any unspent funds.*
- *If a provider fails to spend the full amount granted it in respect of a year, the unspent funds may be recovered by the Commonwealth.*

DECLARATION

I declare that:

- I am authorised by the university to sign this Declaration on its behalf, and
- to the best of my knowledge, the information that I have provided in the **Final Report** and **Acquittal Report** for the HEPPP 2015 National Priorities Pool project *LEAP - University Preparedness (LEAP - UP): Developing a tertiary enabling program for low-SES students from refugee backgrounds* is true, correct and accurate in all particulars.

I understand that:

- The provision of false or misleading information or the making of false or misleading statements to the Commonwealth is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)*.
- If any actual or potential conflict of interest arises, I must notify the Commonwealth immediately in writing of the facts giving rise to the actual or potential conflict of interest and to take such steps as the Commonwealth may require so as to resolve or otherwise deal with any conflict of interest that may arise.

I agree to publication of the Final Report on the Department of Education and Training website, once accepted by the department.

Title Vice-Chancellor and President
Name Professor S. Bruce Downton
Position Chief Executive Officer (Vice-Chancellor)
Signature